

Inside this issue:

AAMC-OSR Meeting	1
Ad Board Update	2
Regional Updates	3
Tips for Philly	5

How to Get the Most out of an AAMC-OSR Meeting

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OSR conferences are one of the most inspiring, energizing and productive experiences reps may have during medical school. Here are some tips for getting the most out of your next OSR conference:

- 1. Know the issues**—Before you leave school, get a sense for what issues are at the forefront of your classmates' minds. Review the program and talk with classmates about their opinions on meeting topics. It may be wise to talk about the upcoming AAMC-OSR meeting at your student government meeting and ask what they would like you to learn from it (e.g., What are the average number of required classes fourth year? What schools have a Medical Spanish elective? What are other schools doing to prepare for the Step 2 CS requirement?). Be prepared to raise these issues in the meetings with your region.
- 2. Select sessions you want to attend**—In addition to the AAMC-OSR Annual and regional meetings, there are a number of additional sessions that you may find of interest. On your first day of the conference, read through the program and mark the sessions that you want to attend. Also, take a moment to look through the speakers from different sections of the AAMC like the GSA (Group on Student Affairs), GSA-MAS (Minority Affairs Section), etc. More often than not, you will find a couple of speakers you would like to hear, if your schedule permits.
- 3. Note-taking during sessions is key**—Jot down a couple of notes per talk in your program and any contact information provided for the speaker. This information will help you later when you send out a meeting summary to your school.
- 4. Introduce yourself**—Get to know the people in your region, other OSR reps, and the Ad Board (Administrative Board). Many of your OSR colleagues are involved in creative projects through the AAMC and at their medical schools. The OSR is a wonderful community of students who are committed to enhancing medical education and the medical student experience. If you stay in academics, you will most likely run into your OSR colleagues in the future.
- 5. Participate**—Before you leave (or while there), consider running for a position. Generally, positions are available for anyone interested (national positions require primary rep status) and if you are not elected your first time, the exposure is always good for a second run. You don't have to have experience to run for office. Also, attend as many sessions as you can and contribute to discussions. You were elected to represent your student body, so do your best to make sure their voice gets heard.

The national spring GSA/MAS/OSR meeting will be held in Philadelphia, PA April 1-5, 2006. For more information, please go to: www.aamc.org/meetings/groups/gsamasosr06/start.htm

OSR Ad Board Update

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OSR Bylaws Approved—The OSR bylaws amendment was approved by unanimous vote at the February meeting of the AAMC Executive Council. Information about the change and forms for certifying new OSR reps has been sent to Student Affairs Deans and OSR Primary reps. Each AAMC member medical school will now have four official OSR representatives, one primary and three alternates. There have been no changes to the voting structure; each school will continue to have one vote. The distribution and selection process for OSR Reps will remain at the discretion of each medical school. However, the bylaws state that: “The [selection] process should include student input, such as a vote of the student body. Institutions should structure the selection of OSR Primary and Alternate Representatives such that medical students from all class years and medical students at institutional satellite or branch campuses are adequately represented.”

Academic Medical Centers and Industry Conflicts of Interest—JAMA published an article on January 25, 2006 entitled: “Health Industry Practices That Create Conflicts of Interest: A Proposal for Academic Medicine,” written by members of the American Board of Internal Medicine and the Institute for Medicine as a Profession. The article called for strict regulation of industry-and academic medical center (AMC) interactions and the prohibition of current practices that include gifts, meals, and direct funding of medical education related events. In February, the AAMC Executive Council requested a task force to examine the implementation and impact of the recommendations.

Graduation Questionnaire—The OSR Ad Board has requested the assistance of OSR representatives to encourage fourth year students at all medical schools to complete the 2006 Graduation Questionnaire; a template letter was distributed to assist reps in relaying the importance of the GQ. A higher completion rate of the 2006 GQ is essential to improving medical education and the healthcare of the nation.

The GQ is administered annually to all senior medical students enrolled at the 125 U.S. LCME-accredited medical schools. It is the only national student survey that assesses medical school curricula, educational debt and financing, healthcare diversity, range and quality of student services, and issues regarding young physicians’ lifestyles and well-being. GQ data are reviewed annually by each medical school, and also guide advocacy efforts on legislative and governmental issues that impact medical schools, teaching hospitals, and the profession on all levels.

Proposal for Residency Application Data—The OSR Proposal for Residency Application Data was discussed with the Group on Student Affairs Steering Committee in January. The OSR Ad Board plans to finalize the proposal and discuss it with the Council of Deans at the next AAMC Executive Council meeting in June. The proposal calls for the AAMC to provide data for senior medical students applying for residency in order to better gauge their competitiveness for specific fields of medicine. There has long been a desire among students to have official information regarding items such as average USMLE Step 1 scores and the range of scores for matched and unmatched applicants and the percentage of applicants with research experience in a chosen specialty.

Physician Workforce—Physician workforce issues continue to evolve as new research is presented by the AAMC Center for Workforce Studies suggesting that a 15% increase in allopathic graduates is likely to be an underestimate of the demands for the physician workforce over the next two decades. The Executive Council will revisit the topic in June and reconsider the position statement.

continued on page 3

New OSR Projects—Increasing recruitment of high school students into medicine: an Ad Board draft proposal requests new AAMC Web-based resources specifically designed for pre-college students and includes ideas for targeting under-represented populations.

The Ad Board is also working with the AAMC communications office to increase participation in Cover the Uninsured Week (CTUW): Organization of Student Representatives (OSR) at AAMC-member medical schools may submit a proposal for grant funding (up to \$500 maximum) from the AAMC for a medical student-sponsored project or event on campus or in the local community that addresses themes pertaining to the nearly 46 million Americans who are living without health coverage. These projects can be developed individually by OSR representative(s) or collaboratively with other campus-based medical student organizations.

Submissions are due by 5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time on Monday, April 10, 2006 via e-mail or fax to: Ally Anderson (aanderson@aamc.org, Fax: 202-862-6060)

www.aamc.org/members/osr/ctuw_proposal_1.pdf

More information about Cover The Uninsured Week is available at: www.covertheuninsured.org

Regional Updates

Northeast Region: Change at Your School

**Elise Malecki, OSR Northeast Regional Chair, University of Maryland,
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OSR members have been instrumental in changing the curricula at US medical schools. As part of the Spring national meeting, there will be a session on third year electives, organized and chaired by Howie Felderman and Sepi Bazel, respectively, of Drexel. As OSR members, you may want to take home talking points to persuade your school's administration to increase exposure to specialties early enough to make informed career choices. Other changes brought about with the help of OSR members have been Medical Spanish and Medical Jurisprudence electives. So, get ready to meet other OSR reps and share strategies!

Southern Region

**John Paul (J.P.) Gniady, OSR Southern Regional Chair, LSUHSC—New Orleans,
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The Southern Region has spent most of the winter focusing on the projects of the new Ad Board as our regional delegates got into sync with their new national delegates. Ongoing conversations at various levels have focused on disaster management, underserved and underrepresented populations, training residents as teachers, evaluation and feedback of medical students throughout the curriculum, and learning communities.

In an effort to make the upcoming spring meeting as productive as possible, we will focus our regional discussions on a few issues set forth by both the Ad Board as well as individual regional representatives. National issues will include academic medicine's relationship with industry (particularly pharmaceutical and medical device industries) as well as the branding and direction of allopathic medicine in the U.S. I would highly encourage reps to look over the "Health Industry Practices that Create Conflicts of Interest" article from the January 5th, 2006 JAMA (Vol 295, No.4) before the meeting in Philly and to feel out some of your classmates and faculty for their views on the issue. I would also ask everyone to consider for themselves, and possibly to also talk to classmates and faculty again, what it is that you believe makes

continued on page 4

allopathic medicine a unique or desirable career path (i.e. why are you going to school to be an MD rather than a DO, NP, PA, etc.).

Of a bit more local flare we will also discuss teaching students/residents to teach, including a presentation from UF on their fourth year elective. Learning communities have also become a hot item as of late and we will have representatives from Baylor and other regional programs that have implemented the concept to share their experiences. I'll also have a brief update on possible solutions to the away-rotation malpractice coverage problems faced by many southern schools. There will of course be time for coverage of other issues, but we're going to try to stay as focused and productive as possible to ensure that everyone has something to take home from this meeting. I look forward to seeing everyone in Philly.

Central Region

Heather Stevens Spader, OSR Central Regional Chair, Sanford SOM of the Univ. of South Dakota, hspader@usd.edu

The Annual Meeting in DC provoked a great deal of discussion about a variety of topics including: MSPE, NBME subject exams, housing issues for residency applicants, and data available to students about specific specialties from the Match. Going forward, we would like to create additional listservs to assist OSR reps on various issues. We will also be compiling a list for the COSR about where our members will be going to residency. This list will be released in late March 2006. The region also continues to support the effort put forth by Charis Van Dusen to get more data about matching into residency regarding average USMLE scores per specialty, average number of interviews per specialty, and other information that is currently not available.

In preparation for the spring meeting, we are working on compiling stories of students in medical school who have dealt with crises ranging from death in the family to depression and other mental illnesses. We want to increase awareness about mental illness in medical school, discuss how administrators can deal with this, and how medical students can get help when they need it.

Western Region

Aron Janssen, OSR Western Regional Chair, University of Colorado SOM, aron.janssen@uchsc.edu

Greetings from the WOSR! We had a productive series of business meetings filled with new faces and fresh enthusiasm at the annual meeting. From those meetings, we continue to brainstorm new ideas (as well as evaluate old ones) for bettering communication between OSR reps and their respective schools, increasing participation in the GQ and increasing OSR rep participation in national projects and surveys. We will be looking forward to the combined national spring meeting where we will receive updates on WOSR projects including the Iraqi Book Drive, the Melanoma Awareness Project, and the GLBT toolkit. Our regional delegates are excited to work with the new leadership and are eager to continue with previous projects and begin new ones.

New to Philadelphia? Tips for Philly

If you have never been to Philadelphia before and are looking for some more information on the city, peruse the following websites:

www.gophila.com/C/Things_to_Do/211.html—This is a great page for tourists, including information on things to do, places to go, some of the history, and more.

www.hellophiladelphia.com—Another tourist site including hotels, restaurants, attractions, maps, etc.

www.philly.com/mld/philly—This is a daily news page with everything from sports to entertainment to local news.

www.philamuseum.org—This is the home page for the Philadelphia Art Museum, which currently features a graphic design exhibit.

www.philadelphiazoo.org—This is the home page for the Philadelphia Zoo. If you have a free afternoon and want to get outside, this just might be the spot for you to get in touch with your wild side.

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